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ABSTRACT

Designed to facilitate rural development efforts, this pamphlet presents a grading key for ranking community factors in each of four key areas of progress as follows: (1) People Building (education, health services, cultural satisfaction, outreach to the disadvantaged, and leadership); (2) Community Facilities (housing, transportation, utilities, and public services); (3) Environmental Improvement (conservation, recreation, and community initiatives); and (4) Economic Development (jobs, business and industry, credit, and natural resources). Additionally, this guide provides instructions for creating a community action plan, suggesting that a graphic community profile be developed; opinions regarding the profile be shared; the community needs be identified and prioritized; tasks be assigned to community representatives; a steering committee be formed; and an action group be established to secure help from such U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies as Cooperative Extension Service, Farmers Home Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. (JC)

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# COMMUNITY REPORT CARD

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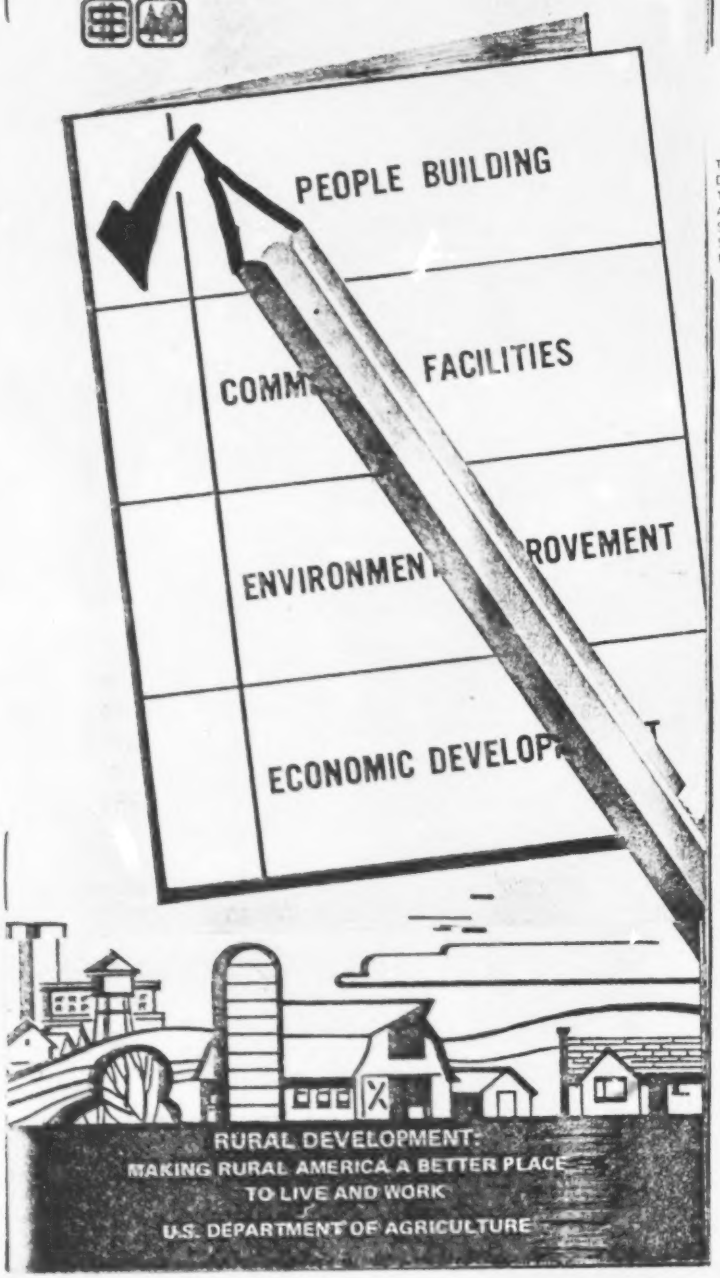


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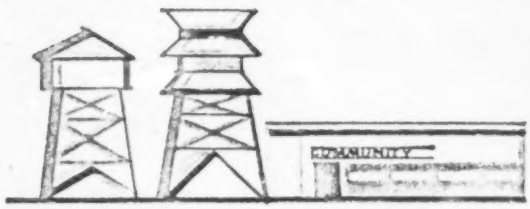
# COMMUNITIES DON'T STAY THE SAME— THEY GET BETTER — OR WORSE.

## FOUR KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS ARE:

### 1 PEOPLE BUILDING

GOOD COMMUNITIES ARE GOOD PLACES TO GROW UP IN AND STAY IN. THEY ARE BUILT BY ACTIVE, PROGRESSIVE CITIZENS. YOUR COMMUNITY CAN PROVIDE THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES NEEDED TO STIMULATE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

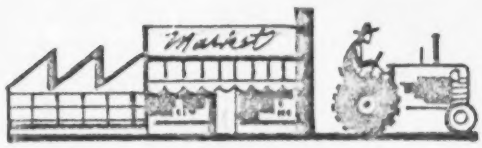


### 2 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

RURAL LIFE DOES NOT HAVE TO LACK URBAN COMFORTS. IT CAN HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: CITY CONVENIENCES AND THE ADVANTAGES OF COUNTRY LIVING. HOW YOUR COMMUNITY STACKS UP IN THIS REGARD IS A MEASURE OF ITS PROGRESS.

### 3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

RURAL AMERICANS ARE THE CUSTODIANS OF MOST OF AMERICA'S NATURAL BEAUTY. YOUR COMMUNITY SHOULD BE PROTECTING ITS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS – IMPROVING THEM – MAKING THEM USEFUL.




### 4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MILLIONS OF YOUTHS WOULD RATHER STAY IN RURAL AMERICA IF THEY COULD. GOOD JOBS ARE A KEY. MAKING YOUR COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK INCLUDES CREATING JOBS. HOW? BY INCREASING FARM AND BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND BY PROMOTING CIVIC IMPROVEMENT. YOUR COMMUNITY SHOULD BE ACTIVE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

## NOW GRADE YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

2

3

| GRADING KEY | |
|---|---|
| Superior | 4 |
| Good | 3 |
| Fair | 2 |
| Poor | 1 |

# PEOPLE BUILDING

EDUCATION — Grade

(Consider adequacy and availability to all)

High school _____

Vocational training facilities and instructors _____

Continuing adult education _____

HEALTH SERVICES

Availability of doctors, nurses, medical facilities _____

Health counseling services for those who need instructions and assistance _____

CULTURAL SATISFACTION

Availability of books and library services _____

Action by civic groups and clubs to meet community cultural needs. (Consider hobbies, music art, plays, athletic programs, youth and adult social programs.) _____

OUTREACH TO THE DISADVANTAGED

Extent to which community needs are met _____

LEADERSHIP

Degree to which your community leaders strive actively to make your community a better place to live and work _____

Degree to which young leadership is encouraged, respected, given a voice _____

Total _____

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

HOUSING — Grade

(Consider all sectors of your community in terms of living conditions — crowding, sanitation, upkeep and appearance, availability and costs) _____

TRANSPORTATION

Adequacy of streets, roads and public transportation service _____

UTILITIES

Adequacy of service and relative cost of —

Electricity and telephones _____

Gas _____

Water _____

Sewers _____

PUBLIC SERVICES

Police services and fire prevention and control _____

Trash and garbage removal _____

Meeting places _____

Hospitals and emergency ambulances _____

Total _____

| GRADING KEY | |
|---|---|
| Superior | 4 |
| Good | 3 |
| Fair | 2 |
| Poor | 1 |

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

CONSERVATION — Grade

- Cleanliness of lakes, streams, ponds, forests and shorelines in your community area _____
- Community antipollution ordinances to insure clean air, land and water _____
- Protection of forests, water and wildlife resources in your community by:
  - Good fire control programs _____
  - Flood prevention and drainage _____
  - Erosion and sediment control _____

RECREATION

- Degree to which private lands and waters in your community are serving local and regional recreational needs: fishing, swimming, skiing, hiking, camping, hunting _____
- Use of public lands in your community to contribute to its beauty, its recreational needs _____

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- Development of a group or committee to determine community environmental improvement needs and priorities _____
- Creative projects – starting forests, development of water resources, beautification of existing assets _____
- Good planning for community growth and expansion _____

Total _____



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

JOBS — Grade

- Degree to which your community encourages youth to stay after high school, college. Grade in terms of –
  - Economic activity _____
  - Financial opportunity _____
- Availability of nonfarm work for part-time farmers _____
- Job finding asistance _____

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

- Quality and variety of stores and services in your community _____
- Attitude of your community with respect to seeking out and encouraging new industry _____
- Community investment in civic improvement _____

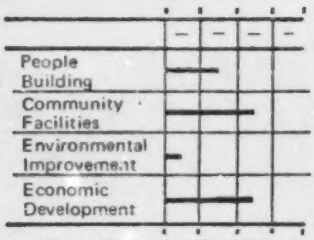
CREDIT

- Adequacy of credit sources _____
- Contribution to community growth by banking and lending initiatives _____

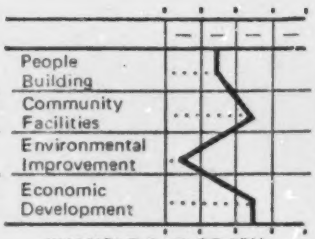
NATURAL RESOURCES

- Use of natural resources – soils, forests, water, shorelines, weather, mountains, wildlife, etc. – to contribute to the community economy _____

Total _____




EXAMPLE BAR GRAPH




EXAMPLE BAR GRAPH

MODELS TO SHOW HOW TO USE CHART BELOW AS GRAPHS

## PLOT YOUR COMMUNITY GRADES

| | 10 POOR | 17 FAIR | 25 GOOD | 33 SUPERIOR | 40 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PEOPLE BUILDING | | | | | |
| COMMUNITY FACILITIES | | | | | |
| ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT | | | | | |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | | | | | |
| | 10 | 17 | 25 | 33 | 40 |

## DO OTHERS AGREE WITH YOUR EVALUATION?

Get several opinions. Exchange views.

FORM AN ACTION GROUP

- Agree on what your community needs to make it better.
- Set priorities.
- Decide on how each task should be approached —
  - by civic volunteer action
  - by municipal, county or State government

8

If you and others think change is needed —

- through Federal or combination State-Federal programs.
- Assign action responsibility for each task.
- Set up a steering committee to push progress, to help with problems, and to publicize accomplishments.

9

# HELP IS AVAILABLE

THROUGHOUT AMERICA, COUNTY, STATE AND REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN FORMED. THEY ARE PREPARED TO:

- PARTICIPATE IN YOUR COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT ON REQUEST
- FURNISH ADVICE REGARDING LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT CAN HELP YOUR COMMUNITY
- SERVE AS A LINK BETWEEN YOUR COMMUNITY AND AGENCIES THAT CAN ASSIST IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
- SEE IF YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS CAN BE MADE A PART OF ON-GOING OR PLANNED COUNTY, STATE OR REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

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TO GET RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS, SEE YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING USDA AGENCIES:

- COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
- FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION
- RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION
- FOREST SERVICE
- SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
- AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE



IT'S YOUR COMMUNITY.
NO ONE KNOWS ITS NEEDS
BETTER THAN YOU AND
YOUR NEIGHBORS.

# TAKE THE INITIATIVE

ISSUED NOVEMBER 1972

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, WRITE:

Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 242-E
Washington, D. C. 20250